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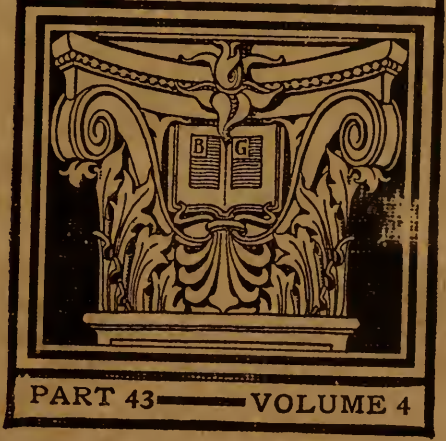

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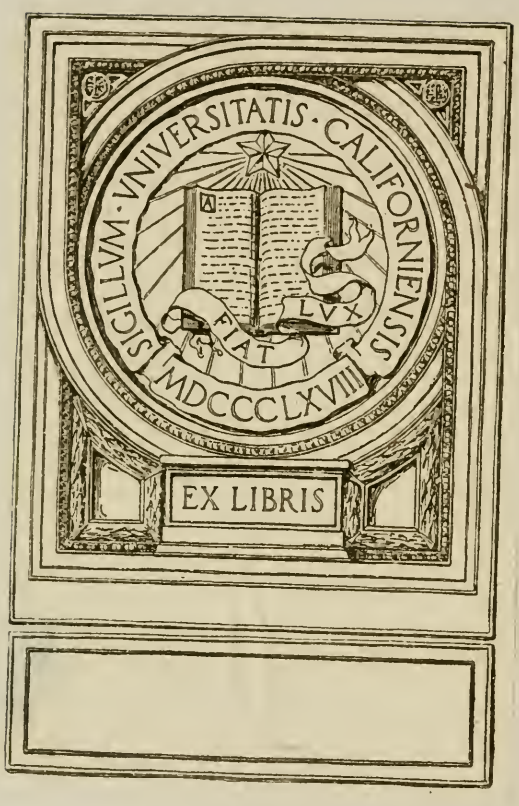
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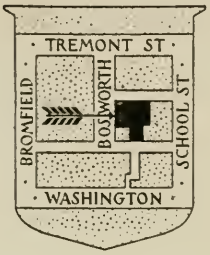

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PORTRAIT OF CARPACCIO FROM AN ENGRAVING

In his chapter devoted to some of the early Venetian painters, Vasari says that Carpaccio is the only one of whom he has been able to procure a portrait The portrait he gives is reproduced above, but of its authenticity we have no proof; nor has any contemporary account of Carpaccio's personal appearance been handed down.

Vittore Carpaccio

BORN 1450 (?): DIED 1522 (?)
VENETIAN SCHOOL

NO painter has portrayed the life and manners of his time and surroundings more vividly than Vittore Carpaccio (pronounced Car-pahtch'yo). In pictures that still glow with the colors that his brush bestowed upon them four hundred years ago, he has set before us imperishably the palaces, streets, bridges, and open squares of Venice of the fifteenth and early sixteenth century, not only showing us the city gay with the fêtes and pageants that were dear to the hearts of her pleasure-loving people, but admitting us also to the intimate seclusion of Venetian households, where we seem to participate in the interests and occupations of the personages he represents.

But of the character and personality of the man who has given us these true pictures of Venetian life during the early Renaissance, history has preserved but few and meager details, not even noting the time or place where he was born, nor when and where he died.

Vasari, who calls him, after the Venetian fashion, Scarpaccio, and whose account of his life, in a chapter devoted to several of the early Venetian painters, is exceedingly brief and unsatisfactory, says that he came from Venice. Ridolfi also speaks of him as a Venetian, "noble by reason of his ancient rights of citizenship, but more illustrious because of his talent." Zanetti, in his work on the painters of Venice, alludes to this right of citizenship, and Lanzi, in his notice of Carpaccio, says that the family of the painter was Venetian—possibly originating in the Island of Murano. Recent writers, however, are of the opinion that Carpaccio, although perhaps of Venetian descent, was born at Capodistria, then one of the possessions of Venice, on the eastern shore of the Adriatic. No positive proof that such was the case can be adduced, but documents have been found in Istria showing that a family of the name of Carpaccio lived there for many generations, and that it had long been the custom to give to the eldest son of the house the name Vittore in honor of St. Victor, who from time immemorial had been regarded with special veneration by the Istrians.

If, however, it be true that Carpaccio was born at Capodistria, it is extremely probable that he went to Venice in his early youth, and spent the rest of his

life there, identifying himself so completely with the Venetians that even the pictures he painted for his native Istria bear the signature: VICTOR CHARPATIUS VENETUS PINXIT, or VICTORI CHARPATII VENETI OPUS.

Nothing is known of Carpaccio's education in art, but it is supposed that he worked in the studio of Alvise Vivarini, and became later a pupil of Gentile Bellini. Because of the predilection he has shown in his pictures for oriental costumes it has been thought that he may have accompanied Gentile Bellini when that artist was sent to Constantinople in 1479 to paint the Sultan's portrait; but no proof exists of his having done so, and the frequent introduction of eastern costumes in his works may readily be accounted for by the fact that Turks, and representatives of other races from the East, were so numerous in the streets of Venice in those days that an artist had ample opportunity to observe and study them.

Between the years 1490 and 1495 Carpaccio painted his most famous work —a series of nine pictures illustrating the medieval legend of St. Ursula—and between 1502 and 1511 he executed another series for the Dalmation Confraternity of St. George and St. Tryphonius, representing scenes from the lives of St. Jerome, St. George, and St. Tryphonius, which may be reckoned as second only in importance. A third series of five pictures, showing scenes from the life of St. Stephen, was painted for the Scuola di San Stefano. In addition to these he executed many works for churches and confraternities, of which the most celebrated is the great altar-piece 'The Presentation in the Temple,' now in the Venice Academy.

It would seem that Venice was not unmindful of Carpaccio's talents, for existing records show that he was employed by the government to embellish the Ducal Palace with his works. In 1501 he painted for it a large historic composition representing Pope Alexander III. celebrating mass in the Church of St. Mark, and a few years later he worked in the Hall of the Great Council of the Palace in collaboration with Giovanni Bellini, receiving for his services the sum of five ducats a month. Unfortunately all his paintings in the Ducal Palace were destroyed by the great fire which broke out there in the year 1577.

Carpaccio's best works were produced between the years 1490 and 1515. After that a decline in his powers is perceptible, although he does not seem to have ceased his labors until 1522, as one of his pictures bears that date. It is believed that he died at Venice, but in what year is not known.

In the absence of information concerning the life of Carpaccio, the following letter, signed by his hand and recently discovered among the archives of the Gonzaga family at Mantua, is of special interest as putting us into personal touch, so to speak, with the man who, except for this, is known to us only through his works. The letter is addressed to Francesco Gonzaga, Lord of Mantua, well known as a patron of artists; but whether it led to any result is not recorded, and there is no evidence to show that Carpaccio had any subsequent relations with the Court of Mantua, nor has any trace been found of the picture of 'Jerusalem,' for which the painter is so anxious to find a purchaser.

Most Illustrious Signor,—A few days ago a person unknown to me, conducted by others, came to see me to look at a 'Jerusalem' that I have painted. As soon as he had seen it he insisted that I should sell it to him, because, as he said, he felt it to be something from which he should get great content and satisfaction. Finally we made a bargain by mutual agreement, but since then I have seen no more of him. That the matter might be explained, I inquired of those who had brought him, among whom was a priest, bearded and clad in gray, whom I had several times seen in the Hall of the Great Council in company with your Highness. Asking the man's name and condition from the priest, I was told that he was one Messer Laurentio, painter to your Illustrious Highness. I then easily understood where this person might be found, and accordingly I direct these presents to your Illustrious Highness that I may make you acquainted with my name and with the subject of my picture.

First, my Lord, I am that painter who was chosen by our Illustrious Signory to paint in the great hall, where your Highness deigned to ascend the scaffolding to see our work, which was the history of Ancona; and my name is Victor Carpatio. As to the 'Jerusalem,' I take it upon myself to say that there is not in our time another picture equal to it, not only for excellence and perfection, but also for size. The height of the picture is twenty-five feet, and the width five feet and a half, as all such things should be measured. Zuane Zamberti has spoken of this work to your Sublimity. It is true, and I know it for a certainty, that the painter belonging to your service has carried away a sketch—unfinished and of small size—which I am sure will not be to the satisfaction of your Highness. If it should please your Highness to submit my picture first to the inspection of some competent judges, upon the least intimation being given to me it shall be at the disposal of your Highness. The picture is on canvas, in distemper, and can be rolled around a piece of wood without any injury to it. If your Lordship should desire it to be painted in oil-colors, it is for your Illustrious Highness to command, and for me, with the utmost care, to execute. Of the price I say nothing, leaving it entirely to your Illustrious Highness, to whom I humbly recommend myself. The xv August, MDXI, at Venice.

I have sent a copy of this letter by another way, so that one may surely reach you.

From your Highness' very humble servant

Victor Carpatio, painter.

The Art of Carpaccio

P. MOLMENTI 'CARPACCIO, SON ŒUVRE ET SON TEMPS'

NOWHERE but in Venice can Carpaccio be really studied and appreciated. There alone do we see him in all his glory, and can trace the influence of his personality on the artistic movement of his day. The society

in which he lived contributed largely in making him the artist that he was, for more perhaps than any other man did Carpaccio love his own times and Venice—that Venice that he delighted to depict, reproducing in his paintings the beauty of her skies and the splendors of her fêtes.

His canvases unfold before our eyes a brilliant vision of the past. Venetian life in its external aspects, as well as in its more intimate relations, is portrayed as if in an instantaneous photograph, and in spite of their red caps and close-fitting hose, their short jackets and parti-colored trousers, we feel that we have known and have even been on intimate terms with the people whom he paints. The artist may indeed be said to have immortalized the manners of his time. . . .

In studying Carpaccio's pictures illustrating the legend of St. Ursula we are impressed by a certain delicate sobriety in his art; it does not dazzle us, but, rather, steals softly into our inmost hearts. Close observation of nature under all its aspects, and a sense of harmony that he so well understood and preserved to so unusual a degree, are combined in Carpaccio's works with imagination and eminent creative faculties, heightened by a sentiment that is both elevated and refined. He gave his personages the most varied expressions of gentleness, fear, joy, serenity, grief, or love. Carpaccio, indeed, as Zanetti has expressed it, "had truth in his very heart."

A power of faithful imitation, a simple and natural arrangement of draperies, a study of relative values and relief, gradation in tones, skill in the management of light and shade,—all these are great qualities; but what charms us far more in Carpaccio is a certain simple and natural elegance, and a harmonious distribution of colors which are arranged without any apparent striving after effect. "Carpaccio," says Charles Blanc, "seems at times to be endowed with the seraphic sweetness of Fra Angelico, as well as with the delicate naturalism of Memling."

The Middle Age has passed away and a new era in art is inaugurated at Venice by Bellini and Carpaccio. An astute critic, Töpfer, has noted the fact that in the paintings of antique art relief and color were altogether subordinate to line. Relief served to emphasize salient points and give force to the representation of form, but did not render all the modeling; while color, differing but slightly from flat tones, was used merely to express certain conventional truths. Carpaccio, on the contrary, studied effects of modeling and coloring, and in his pictures man is invested with all the energy of life. It is indeed by his study of man, a study to which he devoted himself with an interest far keener than any that he felt in surrounding nature, that he gives us a foretaste of modern art.

Ruskin observes that Carpaccio never gave his serious attention to painting the natural objects of the earth, caring only for the beings that people it; that the blue of the sky in his pictures is too pale, the bases of the mountains too small, and that the waves of the sea and waters of the lagoons are painted with very slight regard for nature. In his representations of the stately and majestic architecture of the fifteenth century, however, we see how far Carpaccio had solved the problem of linear perspective, and when we look upon

the buildings, arcades, and towers that he painted, we fancy that we, too, are living amidst the splendors of that city around which art, commerce, and riches cast so brilliant a glamour. . . .

Venice with its rich, varied, and harmonious coloring seems like some radiant vision, the very spot of all others where the scenes of the story of St. Ursula should be portrayed. In one of Carpaccio's pictures of the legend the saint sees in a dream the angel who brings her the tidings of her future martyrdom; but the richness of the bed-hangings, the furniture of her chamber, austere in its elegance, take us back to the intimate life of Venice of the fifteenth century, when riches were allied with the most somber stateliness. In his picture of the English ambassadors in the presence of King Mauro (Plate II), the arches and open loggie recall the Porta della Carta, the Giants' Stairway of the Ducal Palace, the Church of San Zaccaria, that of Santa Maria dei Miracoli—all those buildings, in short, which arose in the fifteenth century as if by magic on the lagoons of Venice. In the painting of King Mauro dismissing the ambassadors, it is Venice that in her public fêtes borrowed the opulent coloring of the Orient, and in the solemn ceremonies of the Republic gave expression to some deeply felt sentiment, some great idea. Again, on the canvas where Carpaccio has represented St. Ursula and her virgins at Cologne, it is in reality not Cologne that he shows us, but Venice joyous and alive with the noise of arms and the activity of labor. In another picture, where the ambassadors return to their king (Plate III), Carpaccio has painted a little hill in the background covered with verdure; but we are not deceived, for here again it is Venice—Venice with the banners of St. Mark lightly floating in the breeze, the air redolent with the odors of the sea, and overhead that sky which disclosed to the painter all the colors of the rainbow.

Carpaccio, indeed, represented historic events after a fashion that was unknown before his day, nor did he hesitate to depart from the traditions of religious art, for even sacred story is warmed by a ray of Venetian sun and enlivened by that gaiety with which the very air of the lagoons is impregnated. In speaking of the angelic children seated on the steps of the throne in Carpaccio's picture of 'The Presentation in the Temple,' Symonds says that while not precisely of human lineage, they are more earthly than Fra Angelico's melodists, and justly observes that Carpaccio was the true interpreter of Venetian devotion, "at once real and devoid of pietistic rapture."

It is precisely this harmony between the real and the ideal that produces a certain delicacy of form not to be found in the work of any other Venetian painter. The voluptuous beauty of the women painted by the sixteenth century artists charms us less than the frank ingenuousness of those whom Carpaccio portrays, who, with their radiant eyes, their delicately elongated faces and slightly prominent foreheads, give the impression of beautiful and melancholy visions. In the great picture of 'The Presentation in the Temple' (Plate VII), what sweetness, what truly divine majesty, characterize the Virgin who presents her Child to the aged Simeon! And just as pure spiritual joys are here made visible under human form, so in the scene representing the meeting of St. Ursula and her betrothed (Plate IV), the sanctity of Chris-

tian love has rarely been rendered with such holy sweetness or a modesty more gracious. Carpaccio is at once naïve and truthful, frank and strong, and in studying his works we end by agreeing with the opinion of that writer, Théophile Gautier, who found in him the purity and seductive grace of Raphael combined with that Venetian coloring which no other school has ever been able to equal.

Carpaccio reproduced nature with a delicate touch, with minute fidelity, and without preconceived idea. His groups are not marked by any great variety, nor does he disturb the tranquil serenity of his composition by any artifice, but simply reproduces what he sees in such a way that the scenes follow one another without any apparent arrangement. For instance, in one of his pictures (Plate IV) we see on one side the English prince taking leave of his father; on the other, this same prince meeting St. Ursula, and again, the royal couple about to embark. Three subjects on one canvas! But what does it matter? Nothing escapes the observant spectator, from the heads that are marvelously drawn and painted, to the most minute architectural details —all rendered in a charming style that, far from mannered and soft in execution, is yet devoid of hardness. Indeed, such is the delicate sobriety of the drawing, such the beauty of the coloring, that all possibility of harshness of execution is excluded.

Although we can sometimes trace the influence of the old school of Squarcione in Carpaccio's work, and sometimes that of the early Flemish and German masters, these influences left no decided mark on his genius, and he returned to the pure fountainhead of nature itself for his inspirations, always remaining true to himself—a painter ever naïve, simple, delicate, and charming. . . .

Beauty of color and purity of form are qualities which characterize other Venetian painters of the fifteenth century, but what we look for in their works in vain is originality of composition. Carpaccio has reproduced with marvelous delicacy of observation the splendors which he himself witnessed—Venetian life, varied, vivid, luxurious, and glowing. Living as he did towards the close of that period when Venice was richest and most powerful, he had a complete appreciation of the life which surrounded him, and may truly be said to be the artistic interpreter of the Venetian people when at the very height of their glory.—ABRIDGED FROM THE FRENCH

CARPACCIO is an artist of great individual fascination. He is essentially a romantic painter. Though he portrays the actual pageantry of the splendid Venetian life—though he is in this sense a realist—yet he tells his story with a peculiar grace and dignity, a certain romantic charm.—SELWYN BRINTON

ANDRÉ PÉRATÉ 'LA GRANDE ENCYCLOPÉDIE'

VITTORE CARPACCIO is one of the most charming among the precursors of the great Venetian painters of the fifteenth century. In his pictures, so skilful and well balanced, we find the germs, so to speak, of the

ample composition of Titian and the sumptuous decoration of Veronese. The most diverse qualities of the two Bellini are, moreover, blended in him—a taste for the picturesque, and a tender and touching sweetness. Again, he shares the delicacy of the Primitives, and at the same time gives evidence of the knowledge, the drawing, and the coloring of his glorious successors—a rare merit which in itself is sufficient to account for the favor he enjoys among modern artists.—FROM THE FRENCH

CARPACCIO is the first illustrator of religious life and legend in Venice, as well as the most delightful story-teller of his time; the finest poet in a city not given to audible verse.—MRS. OLIPHANT

BERNHARD BERENSON 'VENETIAN PAINTERS OF THE RENAISSANCE'

THE Renaissance was a period in the history of modern Europe comparable to youth in the life of the individual. It had all youth's love of finery and of play. The more people were imbued with the new spirit, the more they loved pageants. The pageant was an outlet for many of the dominant passions of the time, for there a man could display all the finery he pleased, satisfy his love of antiquity by masquerading as Cæsar or Hannibal, his love of knowledge by finding out how the Romans dressed and rode in triumph, his love of glory by the display of wealth and skill in the management of the ceremony, and, above all, his love of feeling himself alive. The earlier elements of the Renaissance, the passion for knowledge and glory, were not of the kind to give a new impulse to painting. Nor was the passion for antiquity at all so direct an inspiration to that art as it was to architecture and sculpture. The love of glory had, it is true, led such as could not afford to put up monumental buildings, to decorate chapels with frescos in which their portraits were timidly introduced. But it was only when the Renaissance had attained to a full consciousness of its interest in life and enjoyment of the world that it naturally turned, and indeed was forced to turn, to painting; for it is obvious that painting is peculiarly fitted for rendering the appearances of things with a glow of light and richness of color that correspond to and express warm human emotions.

When it once reached the point where its view of the world naturally sought expression in painting, as religious ideas had done before, the Renaissance found in Venice clearer utterance than elsewhere, and it is perhaps this fact which makes the most abiding interest of Venetian painting.

The growing delight in life, with the consequent love of health, beauty, and joy, was felt more powerfully in Venice than anywhere else in Italy. The explanation of this may be found in the character of the Venetian government, which was such that it gave little room for the satisfaction of the passion for personal glory, and kept its citizens so busy in duties of state that they had small leisure for learning. Some of the chief passions of the Renaissance thus finding no outlet in Venice, the other passions insisted all the more on being satisfied. Venice, moreover, was the only state in Italy which was enjoying, and for many generations had been enjoying, internal peace. This

gave the Venetians a love of comfort, of ease, and of splendor, a refinement of manner, and humaneness of feeling, which made them the first really modern people in Europe. . . .

Thus it came to pass that in the Venetian pictures of the end of the fifteenth century we find neither the contrition nor the devotion of earlier years, when the Church alone employed painting as the interpreter of emotion, nor the learning which characterized the Florentines. The Venetian masters of this time, although nominally continuing to paint the Madonna and saints, were in reality painting handsome, healthy, sane people like themselves, people who wore their splendid robes with dignity, who found life worth the mere living, and sought no metaphysical basis for it. In short, the Venetian pictures of the last decade of the fifteenth century seemed intended not for devotion, as they had been, nor for admiration, as they then were in Florence, but for enjoyment.

The Church itself had educated its children to understand painting as a language, but now that the passions men dared to avow were no longer connected with happiness in some future state only, but mainly with life in the present, painting was expected to give voice to these more human aspirations and to desert the outgrown ideals of the Church. In Florence, the painters seemed unable, or unwilling, to make their art really popular. . . . In Venice alone painting remained what it had been all over Italy in earlier times, the common tongue of the whole mass of the people. Venetian artists thus had the strongest inducements to perfect the processes which painters must employ to make pictures look real to their own generation; and their generation had an altogether firmer hold on reality than any that had been known since the triumph of Christianity. . . .

Painting, in accommodating itself to the new idea, found that it could not attain to satisfactory representation merely by form and color, but that it required light and shadow and effects of space. Indeed, venial faults of drawing are perhaps the least disturbing, while faults of perspective, of spacing, and of color completely spoil a picture for people who have an every-day acquaintance with painting such as the Venetians had. We find the Venetian painters, therefore, more and more intent upon giving the space they paint its real depth, upon giving solid objects the full effects of the round, upon keeping the different parts of a figure within the same plane, and upon compelling things to hold their proper places one behind the other. As early as the beginning of the sixteenth century a few of the greater Venetian painters had succeeded in making distant objects less and less distinct, as well as smaller and smaller, and had succeeded also in giving some appearance of reality to the atmosphere. These are a few of the special problems of painting, as distinct from sculpture for instance, and they are problems which, among the Italians, only the Venetians and the painters closely connected with them solved with any success.

The painters of the end of the fifteenth century who met with the greatest success in solving these problems were Giovanni and Gentile Bellini, Cima da Conegliano, and Carpaccio, and we find each of them enjoyable to

the degree that he was in touch with the life of his day. I have already spoken of the pageants, and of how characteristic they were of the Renaissance, forming as they did a sort of safety-valve for its chief passions. Venice, too, knew the love of glory, and the passion was perhaps only the more intense because it was all dedicated to the State. There was nothing the Venetians would not do to add to its greatness, glory, and splendor. It was this which led them to make of the city itself that wondrous monument to the love and awe they felt for their Republic, which still arouses more admiration and gives more pleasure than any other one achievement of the art-impulse in man. They were not content to make their city the most beautiful in the world; they performed ceremonies in its honor partaking of all the solemnity of religious rites. Processions and pageants by land and sea, free from that gross element of improvisation which characterized them elsewhere in Italy, formed no less a part of the functions of the Venetian State than the high mass in the Catholic Church. Such a function, with doge and senators arrayed in gorgeous costumes no less prescribed than the raiments of ecclesiastics, in the midst of the fairy-like architecture of the Piazza or canals, was the event most eagerly looked forward to, and the one that gave most satisfaction to the Venetian's love of his State, and to his love of splendor, beauty, and gaiety. He would have had them every day if it had been possible, and to make up for their rarity, he loved to have representations of them. So most Venetian pictures of the beginning of the sixteenth century tended to take the form of magnificent processions, if they did not actually represent them. They are processions in the Piazza, as in Gentile Bellini's 'Corpus Christi' picture, or on the water, as in Carpaccio's picture where St. Ursula leaves her home; or they represent what was a gorgeous but common sight in Venice, the reception or dismissal of ambassadors, as in several pictures of Carpaccio's St. Ursula series. Not only the pleasure-loving Carpaccio, but the austere Cima, as he grew older, turned every biblical and saintly legend into an occasion for the picture of a pageant.

But there was a further reason for the popularity of such pictures. The decorations which were then being executed by the most reputed masters in the Hall of the Great Council in the Ducal Palace were, by the nature of the subject, required to represent pageants. The Venetian State encouraged painting as did the Church, in order to teach its subjects its own glory in a way that they could understand without being led on to critical inquiry; and although the paintings in the Ducal Palace doubtless gave a decided incentive to artists, their effect upon the public, for whom they were designed, was even greater. The councilors were not allowed to be the only people to enjoy fascinating pictures of gorgeous pageants and ceremonials. The mutual aid societies—the schools, as they were called—were not long in getting the masters who were employed in the Ducal Palace to execute for their own meeting-places pictures equally splendid. The schools of San Giorgio, Sant' Ursula, and San Stefano employed Carpaccio, the schools of San Giovanni and San Marco, Gentile Bellini, and other schools employed minor painters. . . .

Just as the State chose subjects that glorified itself and taught its own his-

tory and policy, so the schools had pictures painted to glorify their patron saints, and to keep their deeds and example fresh. Many of these pictures—most, in fact—took the form of pageants; but even in such, intended as they were for almost domestic purposes, the style of high ceremonial was relaxed and elements taken directly from life were introduced, and found a sudden and assured popularity, for they play a more and more important part in the pictures executed for the schools, many of the subjects of which were readily turned into studies of ordinary Venetian life. This was particularly true of the works of Carpaccio. Much as he loved pageants, he loved homelier scenes as well. His 'Dream of St. Ursula' (Plate v) shows us a young girl asleep in a room filled with the quiet morning light. Indeed, it may be better described as a picture of a room with the light playing softly on the walls, upon the flower-pots in the window, and upon the writing-table and the cupboards. A young girl happens to be asleep in the bed, but the picture is far from being a merely economic illustration to this episode in the life of the saint. Or, again, take St. Jerome in his study, in the Church of San Giorgio degli Schiavoni (Plate ix). He is nothing but a Venetian scholar, seated in his comfortable, bright library, in the midst of his books, with his little shelf of bric-à-brac running along the wall. There is nothing in his look or surroundings to speak of a life of self-denial or of arduous devotion to the problems of sin and redemption.

In other words, Carpaccio's quality is the quality of a painter of the genre, of which he was the earliest Italian master. His genre differs from Dutch or French not in kind, but in degree. Dutch genre is much more democratic, and, as painting, it is of a far finer quality; but it deals with its subject, as Carpaccio does, for the sake of its own pictorial capacities, and for the sake of the effects of color and of light and shade. . . .

In the sixteenth century painting was not looked upon with the estranging reverence paid to it now. It was almost as cheap as printing has become since, and almost as much employed. When the Venetians had attained the point of culture where they were able to differentiate their sensations and distinguish pleasure from edification, they found that painting gave them decided pleasure. Why should they always have to go to the Ducal Palace or to some school to enjoy this pleasure? That would have been no less a hardship than for us never to hear music outside of a concert-room. This is no merely rhetorical comparison, for in the life of the Venetian of the sixteenth century painting took much the same place that music takes in ours. He no longer expected it to tell him stories or to teach him the catechism. Printed books, which were beginning to grow common, amply satisfied both these needs. He had as a rule very little personal religion, and consequently did not care for pictures that moved him to contrition or devotion. He preferred to have some pleasantly colored thing that would put him into a mood connected with the side of life he most enjoyed—with refined merrymaking, with country parties, or with the sweet dreams of youth. Venetian painting alone among Italian schools was ready to satisfy such a demand, and it thus became the first genuinely modern art; for the most vital difference that can

be indicated between the arts in antiquity and modern times is this, that now the arts tend to address themselves more and more to the actual needs of men, while in olden times they were supposed to serve some more than human purpose.

CARPACCIO is, in the most vital and conclusive sense, a man of genius, who will not at all supply you, nor can in the least supply himself, with sublimity and pathos to order; but is sublime, or delightful, or sometimes dull, or frequently grotesque, as Heaven wills it; or—as profane persons will say—as the humor takes him.—JOHN RUSKIN

W. J. STILLMAN 'OLD ITALIAN MASTERS'

CARPACCIO had the Venetian sense of color in a high degree, but the telling of his story was evidently more important to him than his technique, and he never attained the complete mastery of oils that some of his contemporaries gained. As a story-teller, however, he has had no superior in the school of Venice, and perhaps none in Italian art. His imagination is wayward, subtle, full of minute inventions and happy surprises, and his originality is distinct, and, in his most matured and characteristic work, almost separates him from the contemporary Venetian art, though in his methods he at times adheres to one or another of the teachers with whom he was associated in his early training.

Carpaccio leaves upon me the impression of an artist in whom the subject had always overpowered the art, in whom invention ran so far ahead of the power of delivery that he had no time to wait for his brush to do its work completely. To the dilettante who studies him, and who is not led aside from the intellectual conception by the critical study of methods and technical mastery, he offers more intense satisfaction than some of the greater painters —a satisfaction which I must hold to be apart from the purely artistic standard. It is on this ground that Ruskin does him honor.

Living and dying as Carpaccio did in the midst of a community in which the technical appreciation of art had been fed to the utmost by daily study of the greatest triumphs of color the world has seen, his life and his exit from it, as well as his works, attracted less attention than they merited. Thus it is that we know nothing of him personally, and know not when or where he was born, nor the time and place of his death.

WHAT stirs one most in Carpaccio is his faith, his warmth, the power he has of moving and being moved, the truth and depth of his expression, his unparalleled sincerity.—CHARLES YRIARTE

E. H. AND E. W. BLASHFIELD AND A. A. HOPKINS, EDITORS 'VASARI'S LIVES'

CARPACCIO is the minstrel, the tale-teller; more than any of the others of his school of Venice he fascinates and entertains. His canvases delight us with what seems a strange and wonderful mingling together of the

Bible and 'The Arabian Nights,' yet his piety is unaffected and his gaiety is steadied by a flavor of Flemish earnestness. He is a true Venetian of Venice, that marvelous hybrid in the arts, with its Byzantine sense of color, its quaint overlay of northern influence, its solid Italian good sense and realism; and it is partly because he tells us, with the sincerity of one who is still to a certain extent a primitive master, the wonderful story of this meeting of East and West and North, that his pictures hold us so long.

Like Gentile Bellini, Carpaccio loves a panoramic development of a subject with a regular architectural setting and a foreground filled with busy figures; but although he is a much less skilful draftsman than Gentile, he has far more invention and poetic sense. Indeed, though he is inferior to Giovanni Bellini in depth of feeling, or loftiness of style, he unites in a very happy way the qualities of the great Bellini brothers. His drawing is often faulty; his figures spindle-shanked, short-bodied, and sometimes cloven almost to the waist by their long legs; his faces are frequently homely, others of them are lacking in construction; but the charm of his work makes up for all, while the lightness of treatment of his sacred legends is qualified and ennobled by some of the clearest and most golden color to be found in the whole range of art.

The Works of Carpaccio

DESCRIPTIONS OF THE PLATES

'ST. VITALIS AND OTHER SAINTS' PLATE I

CARPACCIO painted this famous picture in the year 1514, for the Church of San Vitale, Venice, where it may still be seen in the choir of the church, behind the high altar.

According to the legend, St. Vitalis of Ravenna, who served in the army of the Roman Emperor Nero and was converted to Christianity by St. Peter, was tortured and buried alive, as a punishment for having cared for the body of a Christian martyr and given it honorable burial. In early paintings he is represented as a soldier, sometimes with a martyr's crown, and sometimes on horseback as in this picture by Carpaccio, where he is shown clad in armor and mounted on a white charger. St. Valeria, his wife, in red cloak and green robe and holding a martyr's palm, stands beside him. Near her is St. George with the standard of victory. On the other side are St. John the Baptist with a lamb, and St. James with book and staff, their long red mantles harmonizing with the landscape background beyond. Upon a balcony surmounting a high arched screen are the two sons of St. Vitalis—St. Gervasius and St. Protasius—attended by St. Peter with a book, and St. Andrew bearing a cross. One of Carpaccio's charming little angel-musicians is seated between them, and above, the Virgin and Child appear in glory.

Although not one of Carpaccio's greatest works, lacking, as Signor Mol-

menti has said, "the freshness and serenity of youthful inspiration," this altar-piece is interesting not only because of the original and somewhat curious arrangement of the different groups, but for the rich architectural details and the charming landscape seen between the open arches of the screen.

The picture measures over nineteen feet high by about eight feet wide. The figures are life-size.

SCENES FROM THE LEGEND OF ST. URSULA PLATES II, III, IV, AND V

ACCORDING to the legend of St. Ursula, a certain king of Brittany, whose name in the Italian version of the story was Mauro, had a beautiful and accomplished daughter called Ursula. Her hand was sought in marriage by numerous suitors, and among other aspirants was Conon, son of Agrippinus, King of England. Ambassadors from the English court were accordingly despatched to Brittany to present to King Mauro the proposal of their monarch that the princess should become the wife of his son. Now Ursula had determined to wed no one, in order that she might the more diligently devote herself to the service of religion; but in accordance with her father's wishes she consented to be affianced to the English prince on three conditions: first, that the King of England should give her as attendants eleven thousand virgins of noble birth; secondly, that before the proposed marriage three years should be allowed her and her companions in which to make a pilgrimage to Rome to visit certain shrines; and thirdly, that Prince Conon and his suite should become Christians.

With this reply the English ambassadors returned to their king, who at once agreed to accept all the conditions, and forthwith Prince Conon set out to pay the princess a visit before she should embark upon her pilgrimage.

In the course of time Ursula and her virgin attendants reached Rome, where they were welcomed by Pope Cyriacus, and joined by Prince Conon and his suite, who had arrived on the same day by a different route. Ursula now confided to her lover that it had been revealed to her in a dream that she and her companions were doomed to suffer martyrdom at Cologne, through which city they must pass on their return home. Warned of her impending fate, Prince Conon abandoned all hope of marriage with the princess, and kneeling by her side at the feet of Pope Cyriacus, received baptism at his hands, and assumed the name of Ethereus, to express the purity and regeneration of his soul.

The whole party then set out on their homeward journey, accompanied by the pope and several cardinals and bishops; but when they had proceeded as far as Cologne, they found themselves surrounded by the Huns, who were then laying siege to that city, and by whom they were all mercilessly put to death. Prince Conon was the first to die at the feet of his beloved princess. She herself was shot dead by the arrows of the heathen king of the Huns, and her spirit, with the spirits of all her virgin attendants and those of her betrothed husband and his companions, ascended into heaven and there received the reward of their martyrdom.

Such, in brief, is the legend of St. Ursula, a legend which before Carpaccio's

famous paintings of its various scenes were executed had long been a favorite subject with early artists and had already inspired the delicate brush of the Flemish painter, Hans Memling, whose work, 'The Shrine of St. Ursula,' in Bruges, had attained wide celebrity. Carpaccio's illustrations of the story bear a close affiliation with Memling's paintings, showing, as a recent critic has said, "how straight was the road that led in the fifteenth century from the canal cities of the North to the city of the lagoons on the Adriatic."

Carpaccio's pictures of the legend of St. Ursula were painted between the years 1490 and 1495 for the Scuola di Sant' Ursula, an institution in Venice devoted to the support and education of orphan girls. Taken collectively, these paintings, now in the Venice Academy, are the artist's greatest work. Individually, however, they are of varying merit. The finest among them, of which four examples are here reproduced, show us Carpaccio at his best —as the unsurpassed teller of legend and romance, the painter *par excellence* of the brilliant pageantry of Venice.

PLATE II: 'THE ENGLISH AMBASSADORS BEFORE KING MAURO.' In the center of this picture, which is divided into three parts, we see Mauro, King of Brittany, seated among his courtiers, receiving the ambassadors of the English king, one of whom, clad in a rich robe of black and gold brocade, kneels before him and presents a letter from Agrippinus, asking the hand of Princess Ursula for his son. In the distance, bordering a canal, are Venetian buildings rendered in delicate tones of color. To the left of this scene, in a loggia of the palace, attendants in picturesque and bright-colored costumes are gathered, and to the right we see King Mauro, his robe of soft brownish yellow relieved by the white spread and mulberry-colored canopy of the bed beside which he is seated, discussing the proposed marriage with his daughter, who, as she stands before him in gown of grayish blue and bright red mantle, enumerates the conditions upon which she will consent to marry the English prince.

The picture is on canvas, and measures nine feet one inch high by about nineteen feet wide.

PLATE III: 'RETURN OF THE AMBASSADORS TO ENGLAND.' Under a pavilion supported by marble columns the English king receives his ambassadors upon their return from Brittany. Although the scene is supposed to be laid in England, the whole character is distinctly Venetian, from the carefully detailed architecture to the various groups of people in picturesque costumes of richly brocaded tunics, bright red stockings and caps—even to the monkey which Carpaccio has placed on the steps of the king's pavilion and has humorously arrayed as a Venetian senator.

Elaborately as the details of the scene are carried out, they are all subordinated to the principal incident of the composition. "The sunlight effect under which the picture is painted," writes Sir Charles Eastlake, "the refined sense of color which it displays, and, above all, the genuine naturalism of the scene, combine to render this work one of the most attractive in the series."

The canvas is nearly ten feet high by seventeen feet wide.

PLATE IV: 'THE ENGLISH PRINCE TAKES LEAVE OF HIS FATHER.' This picture, divided by a flagstaff into two parts, represents, on the left, the English king standing on a pier surrounded by his courtiers and bidding farewell to Prince Conon, who kneels before him to receive the paternal blessing before setting out to visit his affianced bride. The feudal castles with crenelated towers introduced in the background are intended to represent an English port, but are more suggestive of Italian architecture.

Immediately to the right of the flagstaff we see the landing of the prince in Brittany and his meeting with Ursula, while at the extreme right of the picture, the prince and princess kneel before King Mauro. Here again the architectural setting carries us to Venice, as do the brilliant costumes, elaborate in detail, and rich in their varying tones of red, the blue waters of the sea, in which ships of fantastic shape are anchored, and, above them all, the luminous Italian sky. Of the whole series, this canvas is the most pictorial and entertaining. It measures nine feet one inch high by twenty feet wide.

PLATE V: 'THE DREAM OF ST. URSULA.' This picture, which measures about nine feet square, and is the most naïvely charming in the series, shows us the bedchamber of St. Ursula, who lies peacefully sleeping in her high four-post bedstead with its canopy and coverlet of red. Through a doorway on the right an angel enters in a flood of early morning light, bearing in his hand a palm, emblem of Ursula's future martyrdom.

In Mr. Ruskin's poetical description of this picture, unfortunately too long to be given here, each exquisitely rendered detail of the medieval room is noted—the arched windows, painted crimson around their edges, and partly open to the morning sky; the Greek vases on the sills, with a plant in each; the sage-green cloth that covers the lower part of the walls, white and bare above; the low reading-table with white fringed cover, and open book lying on it; the case of books near by; the small blue slippers of the princess beside the bed; her crown placed on a ledge at the foot; and the little dog, which, though awake and vigilant, takes no notice of the entrance of the heavenly visitant.

"The other pictures of the series," writes Mrs. Oliphant, "may be more rich in incident and expression, and have a higher dramatic interest, but the sleep of Ursula is exquisite and goes to every heart."

'ST. STEPHEN DISPUTING WITH THE DOCTORS' PLATE VI

THIS picture, one of a series consisting of four canvases and an altar-panel, painted by Carpaccio between 1511 and 1515 for the Scuola di San Stefano at Venice, is now in the Brera Gallery, Milan. Of the other pictures of the series, all representing scenes from the life of St. Stephen, one is in the Louvre, one in the Berlin Gallery, and another in the Museum of Stuttgart. The fifth picture—the altar-panel—has disappeared.

In the painting reproduced in Plate VI Carpaccio has represented the youthful St. Stephen, in his deacon's habit of red embroidered with gold, disputing with the doctors of the law, who, dressed in brown, scarlet, and blue

gowns, with black caps or white turbans on their heads, are grouped about him, some seated beneath an open portico supported by columns, others standing just outside. The canvas measures about four feet eight inches high by nearly six feet wide. The figures are about a quarter the size of life, the heads are well modeled, and the faces full of expression.

The architectural setting of the scene is especially well rendered. The various buildings, both European and oriental in character, are painted with all the care that Carpaccio invariably bestowed upon the architectural details of his pictures, which are here thrown into relief by a background of a charming Italian landscape with blue sky and light clouds.

'THE PRESENTATION IN THE TEMPLE' PLATE VII

THIS celebrated picture, Carpaccio's masterpiece, was painted in the year 1510 for the Church of San Giobbe, Venice. It is now in the Venice Academy, where it hangs near the great altar-piece by Giovanni Bellini painted for the same church (see Volume 1, Part 9, of this SERIES), and with which, though less golden in color, it may well be compared in grandeur of composition and beauty of conception.

The Virgin stands in an apsidal recess decorated with mosaics, bearing the Child Jesus in her arms and attended by two richly dressed young women, one of whom carries a basket containing doves. The Virgin's robe is pale crimson, her long mantle peacock blue, and a white linen veil covers her head. Opposite to her, in an attitude of deep reverence, is St. Simeon followed by two priests. He is clad in the garments of a bishop, with cope of gold and purple brocade bordered with a band on which various scenes from the Old Testament are exquisitely represented in feigned embroidery. On the marble steps leading to the recess are seated three golden-haired children in bright-hued robes.

"This is a very impressive work," writes Sir Charles Eastlake. "In the finely conceived and venerable head of Simeon we find united an expression of tenderness and dignity rarely realized by any painter of this period. The Infant Christ is exquisitely graceful. The Virgin's features, though beautiful, are less interesting than those of her nearest companion. Among the chief charms of the picture is the delightful trio of angels—one may almost call them celestial children, for they are wingless—which supplements and completes the composition. In every detail the sense of color is refined and harmonious, though time, and possibly the light in which it is hung, have imparted a somewhat gray tone to the picture."

'THE MEETING OF ST. JOACHIM AND ST. ANNA' PLATE VIII

IN this picture, painted in the year 1515 for the Church of San Francesco, at Treviso, and now in the Venice Academy, Carpaccio has represented the story, told in the Apocrypha, of the meeting of the parents of the Virgin before the Golden Gate. St. Anna's robe is blue with yellow sleeves, and she wears a long red mantle. St. Joachim is clad in a green robe, red

tunic, and gray cloak embroidered with gold. At the right of the picture stands St. Ursula in a blue gown, yellow underskirt, and rose-colored mantle. A crown is placed upon her blond hair, and she holds a banner and a martyr's palm. St. Louis of France is on the left, in purple robe and mantle of blue and gold brocade with ermine cape.

"The action of the principal group is pathetic in motive," writes Sir Charles Eastlake, "notwithstanding the large and cumbrous folds in which the draperies are cast. The carefully detailed architecture of the background indicates a transition from medieval to Renaissance types. The painting, which is executed on panel, is distinguished by a smooth hard impasto, and by the use of rich but carefully gradationed colors. The facial shadows are light and transparent, while those which define the draperies are forcible to excess. The drawing of the hands throughout is refined and delicate."

Taine, giving less attention to the technical qualities of the work, was struck by the poetic beauty of the faces. "No more serene and peaceful countenances can be imagined," he writes. "St. Ursula, pale and gentle, her head slightly inclined to one side, is indeed a saint; all the candor, humility, and piety of the middle ages are expressed in her face and attitude."

The picture measures about six feet high by five and a half feet wide, and the principal figures are two-thirds the size of life.

'ST. JEROME IN HIS STUDY' PLATE IX

BETWEEN the years 1502 and 1511 Carpaccio painted a series of pictures for the Church of San Giorgio degli Schiavoni (St. George of the Slavonians) belonging to the Scuola or Confraternity of St. George and St. Tryphonius, which had been established in Venice fifty years before by some charitable men of Dalmatia, of the Illyrian or Slavonic nation, for the relief of poor sailors and others of their own nationality.

Upon entering this little church we find ourselves in a rectangular room with walls wainscoted in dark wood. Above the wainscoting are nine pictures by Carpaccio, each about four feet and a half high, and all varying in width, representing seven scenes from the lives of St. Jerome, St. George, and St. Tryphonius, and two from sacred history. Such is the harmony of color produced by these paintings in the dim light of the church—a harmony of violet, rose, green, white, yellow, and ultramarine—that, as Mr. Ruskin has said, the effect is that of "soft evening sunshine, or glow from embers on the hearth; resolving itself into a kind of checkering, as of an eastern carpet of more than usually broken and sudden variegation."

The three paintings on the right of the entrance represent scenes from the life of St. Jerome. Born about the middle of the fourth century, this saint was celebrated for his piety and his learning; his Latin version of the Bible, known as the Vulgate, being alone sufficient to establish his fame as a scholar, and cause him to be regarded as the special patron of students of theology.

In the picture reproduced in Plate IX, one of the finest and best preserved of the series, Carpaccio has given us one of the earliest examples of genre-

painting. Clad in a white surplice and red gown, a dark brown cape covering his shoulders, St. Jerome is seated at his writing-table. All the appointments of the room—the Venetian furniture, elegant and graceful in form, the books and ornaments arranged on shelves, the manuscripts scattered over the floor, even the little white dog watching his master so intently—show that Carpaccio, as Signor Molmenti has observed, did not derive his inspiration from the mysticism of the middle ages, but, in a spirit characteristic of the Renaissance, has portrayed a scene taken from the actual world about him. "This realism," writes Symonds, "if the name can be applied to pictures so poetical as Carpaccio's, is not like the Florentine realism, hard and scientific. A natural feeling for grace and a sense of romance inspire the artist, and breathe from every figure that he paints."

"The picture of 'St. Jerome in his Study,'" writes Mr. Henry James, "is a pearl of sentiment, and I may add, without being fantastic, a ruby of color. It unites the most masterly finish with a kind of universal largeness of feeling, and he who has it well in memory will never hear the name of Carpaccio without a throb of almost personal affection."

'COMBAT OF ST. GEORGE AND THE DRAGON' PLATE X

THIS picture in the Church of San Giorgio degli Schiavoni, Venice (see the description of Plate IX), is an example of the painter's skill as a teller of legends and fairy-tales. It represents a scene from the life of St. George, who, so the story goes, delivered the land of Lybia from the ravages of a terrible dragon which had put to flight all who had ventured to attack it, and had destroyed many by its poisonous breath. To appease the hunger of this monster the people were obliged to provide it with two sheep daily, and when all the sheep had been consumed they drew lots and gave the dragon their children. Finally the lot fell upon the only daughter of the king of that country, who, in his grief, offered the half of his kingdom if his child might be spared the dreadful fate. His prayers and protestations were, however, in vain, and accordingly the princess, clothed in her royal robes, went forth to the sacrifice. As she stood in the place where the monster came each day for his victims, it happened that St. George passed that way, and upon learning from the princess the cause of her sorrow, offered himself as her champion to do battle with the dragon, which at that moment was seen approaching. Thereupon, making the sign of the cross, St. George rushed to the combat, and after a fierce struggle, vanquished the monster and led him dying into the city, where he agreed to kill him, on condition that the king and all the people would embrace Christianity.

The picture reproduced in Plate X represents the combat of St. George and the dragon. The saint in armor, mounted on a brown horse, and with his yellow hair floating in the breeze, rides full tilt at the dragon, transfixing him with his spear. The rescued princess, in long red mantle, stands at the right. The ground is strewn with the remains of former victims, and in the distance, near a blue sea, is seen an eastern city, its towers and minarets outlined against the glow of a sunset sky. Much has been written in praise of

this famous picture, most notably by Mr. Ruskin, whose excessive admiration for it and others of the series is poetically, but in no way critically, expressed in a supplement to his 'St. Mark's Rest,' entitled 'The Shrine of the Slaves.'

"This St. George," write Vasari's recent editors, "rides straight out of the Seven Champions of Christendom; he is very famous among æsthetes and artists, and has been praised so highly that he has had perhaps a little more than his deserts. Rising in his stirrups, bending forward at the waist, painted as by one who knew how real knights at real joustings looked, and how they sat their horses, this flaxen-haired, black-armored hero is a most charming militant saint, but his horse, though it gallops with plenty of movement, is a hobby-horse after all, and to place the St. George on a par with the statue of Colleone or that of Gattamelata would be to mistake the nature of art criticism."

A LIST OF THE PRINCIPAL PAINTINGS BY CARPACCIO WITH THEIR PRESENT LOCATIONS

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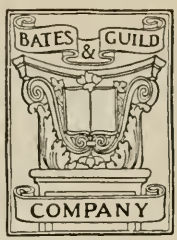

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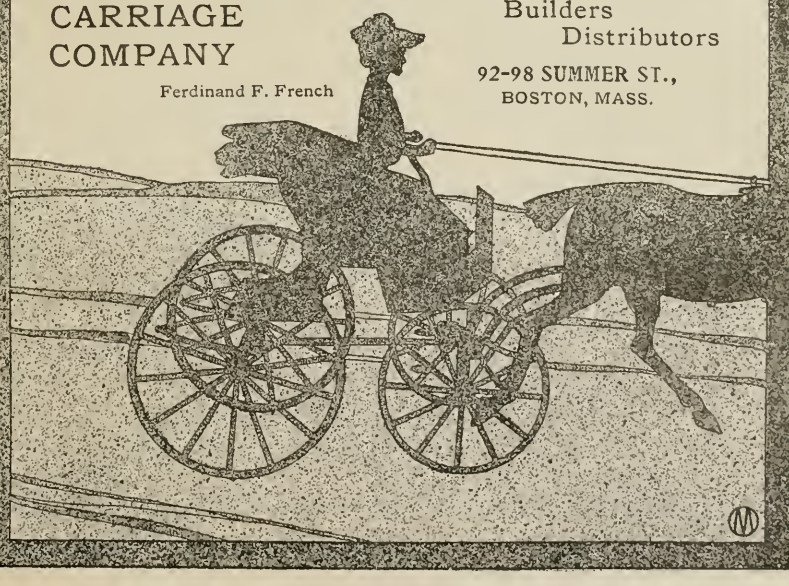

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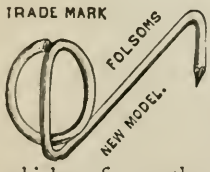

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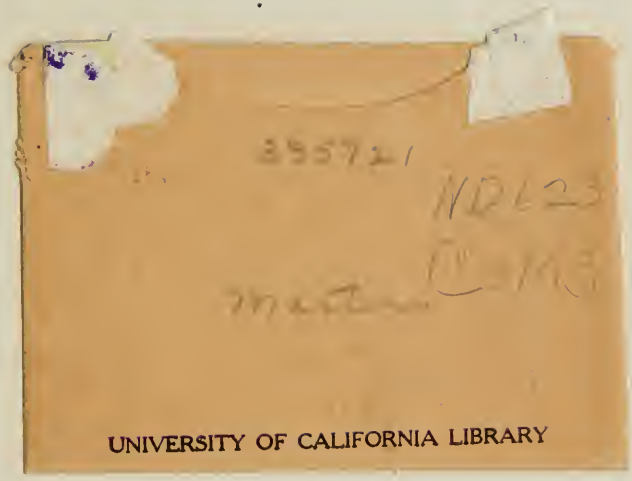
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